

Serial No.: 09/683,417  
Attorney Docket No.: F-428

Patent

### REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are pending in the application. In the June 20, 2002 Office Action, the Examiner required election under 35 U.S.C. § 121 to one of the following allegedly distinct inventions as shown in the claim groups:

- I. Claims 1-6, classified by the Examiner as in class 422, subclass 1; and
- II. Claims 7-25, classified by the Examiner as in class 232, subclass 17.

The Examiner stated that Group I is drawn to a process for decontaminating mail in a mailbox and that Group II is drawn to a mailbox system for decontaminating mail. The Examiner stated that the process for using the product as claimed can be practiced with a materially different product such as a process for decontaminating food in a decontamination chamber.

In response, Applicant hereby elects with traverse to prosecute Group II.

Applicant respectfully submits that there would not be a serious burden on the Examiner if restriction were not required. Although the Examiner has identified two separate subclasses, a search of the prior art regarding Group II may reveal whether prior art exists with regard to the claims of Group I.

If there is no significant burden on the Examiner to examine the inventions of Group I and II in the subject application, applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner should examine the entire application on the merits. See MPEP § 803.

### CONCLUSION OF REMARKS

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the restriction requirement.

Applicant respectfully requests early and favorable action by the Examiner. If the Examiner believes that any issues may be resolved by a telephone interview, the

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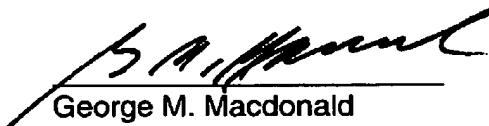
Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned attorney for Applicant at (203) 924-3180.

**AUTHORIZATION**

No fee is believed due with this response. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for the response or credit any overpayment to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-428.

In the event that an extension of time or additional extension of time is required to make this response timely filed, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to the Pitney Bowes, Inc. Deposit Account Number 16-1885, Order No. F-428.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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